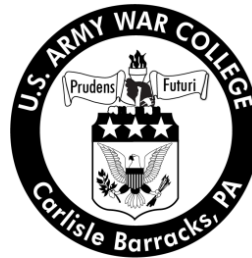


# Civilian Research Project USAWC Fellow

## The Arab Spring in Egypt: What are the Implications for U.S. Foreign Policy

by

Colonel Thomas R. Drew  
United States Army



United States Army War College  
Class of 2013

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The Arab Spring changed the political landscape of the Middle East. Most notable for U.S. foreign policy is the change of leadership in Egypt. The Mubarak regime is out of power, and in its place is a new government led by the Muslim Brotherhood. Egypt's recent history (1882 to Present) provides context to the political and social forces that will impact U.S. foreign policy. Egypt's willingness to continue an economic and security partnership with the U.S. is affected by events such as the British occupation, the creation of the State of Israel, the Arab-Israeli Wars, and U.S. support for the Mubarak regime. All of this history, combined with the longstanding goals of the Muslim Brotherhood, creates enormous challenges for U.S. policymakers. However, Egypt is the most populous country in the Middle East and is of strategic importance. Therefore the U.S. must find ways to work with the Morsi regime to ensure stability and peace in the region. This paper recommends general themes to accomplish that goal.





## **The Arab Spring in Egypt: What are the Implications for U.S. Foreign Policy**

On 17 December 2010 a street vendor (Mohamed Bouazizi) in Sidi Bouzid, Tunisia (125 miles southwest of Tunis) set himself on fire in protest of the confiscation of his vegetable stand by police. His individual protest sparked a firestorm of civil revolt that swept across North Africa and the Middle East. The actions of Mohamed Bouazizi inspired protestors throughout the region to demand change and to remain resolute in the face of their regime's sometimes-brutal attempts to stifle their voices. This popular uprising became known as the Arab Spring.

The Arab Spring initiated dramatic change in the Middle East. Most notable for U.S. foreign policy, and ultimately for stability in the region, is the change of leadership in Egypt. The Mubarak regime is now out of power, and in its place is a new government led by the Muslim Brotherhood. As the U.S. formulates its strategy for engaging with the new Egyptian government, it is critical to understand the influence, and long-standing vision of the Muslim Brotherhood for Egyptian society; President Morsi's background and worldview; and the current state of the Egyptian economy. The U.S. relationship with the new Egyptian regime, good or bad, will have a significant impact on America's influence in the Middle East for decades to come. Therefore, using the framework of national power (Diplomacy, Information, Military, and Economic), this paper will illuminate the context of the U.S. relationship with Egypt and potential strategies that support U.S. objectives regardless of whether Egypt becomes a more Islamist State or continues down the path towards secular democracy.

## **Context: Egypt in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century**

To fully comprehend the current situation in Egypt it is important to look back at Egypt's recent history to provide context to the political and social forces that brought to power an Islamist-leaning government predominated by the Muslim Brotherhood. It is also important to understand how the anti-western sentiment began in Egypt and how it evolved as the U.S. shapes its engagement strategy for Egypt. Although Egypt's history goes back thousands of years, the history relevant to today's issues began in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century: British occupation, the rise of political Islam, the founding of Israel, the Free Officers coups, the Camp David accords, and Egypt's economy.

Egypt began the 20<sup>th</sup> Century as a country struggling for independence from British occupation. In 1882 Egyptian Army officers took control of Egypt, forcing Khedive<sup>1</sup> Tawfiq to flee the palace and seek refuge in Alexandria. The British were heavily invested throughout Egypt and in the Suez Canal and sought to reinstate the political stability of the Tawfiq regime. British forces invaded on both the northern and southern ends of the Suez Canal and finally defeated the Egyptian Army at the Battle of Tel El-Kebir. Tawfiq was reinstated as the Khedive, but this began the British occupation of Egypt. The relationship between the British and the Egyptians, once a mutually beneficial economic partnership, steadily deteriorated as a result of the occupation.

In 1906 an incident in the village of Dinshaway galvanized public opinion against the British. The incident was triggered when five British officers entered the village to go pigeon shooting. The villagers were angered by the actions of the British officers and an altercation ensued resulting in an Egyptian woman being shot. The outraged

villagers assaulted the British officers by beating them with sticks and clubs. One officer ran for help and died of heatstroke. British authorities returned to the village and tried 57 villagers for the death of the British officer. Many were found guilty, some were publicly flogged and four were hanged. Egyptians as well as most Europeans felt the sentences were a harsh overreaction. The incident in Dinshaway allowed Egyptians opposed to British occupation to rally others to their cause. An organized anti-British, Egyptian Nationalist movement was born in the aftermath of the incident and continued to gather support.

Following World War I, Egyptians stepped up their dissent for the occupation (called a protectorate in British parlance) by conducting mass protests in March and April 1919. To the Egyptians this was a revolution seeking independence, but the British saw the uprising as simply anti-colonial riots and used force to suppress the rioters; killing hundreds of Egyptians. The unrest continued through the summer and fall and finally provoked a response from British Parliament. The British Foreign Secretary sent Lord Milner<sup>2</sup> to Egypt to get a feel for what was happening and ultimately propose a solution. His solution was to replace the protectorate with a treaty but neither the Egyptians nor the British Parliament found the terms acceptable.

Undeterred by the lack of progress, the Egyptians kept pressuring the British for independence and in 1922 the Egyptians finally won independence and established the Republic of Egypt. This 50-year struggle for independence from the British Empire would have a lasting impact on the perceptions of the Egyptian people towards European (Western) involvement in the region.

Following their independence, Egypt formed a parliamentary style government. Cosmetically, Sultan Fuad changed his title to King Fuad of the Republic of Egypt. However, the basics of the situation for the Egyptians did not change. The years following independence did not improve the standard of living for the average Egyptian causing the middle and lower classes of Egypt to slowly turn their resentment from the British to the King Fuad regime. It was during this period (1923 to the mid 1930s) that many turned to Islam to answer the problems in Egyptian society. The most prominent voice promoting a return to fundamentalist Islam was a young schoolteacher and Imam, Hassan al-Banna, the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood.

In 1936 King Fuad died and was succeeded by his 16-year-old son, Farouk. Although the Parliament retained the preponderance of authority in Egypt, King Farouk was the head-of-state and the face of the regime to the average citizen. His flamboyant lifestyle and inability to solve domestic problems such as poverty, infrastructure repair/improvement, education, and the overall Egyptian economy turned the public against him. In the late 1940s, Egypt's wealthy controlled 80% of the arable land and 65% of the country's asset base, while the poor of Egypt (80% of the population)<sup>3</sup> had little hope of prosperity. However, Egypt's defeat during the Arab Israeli war in 1948-49 was the catalyst that finally ended the 150-year reign of the Muhammad Ali Dynasty.

In July 1952 a group of Egyptian Army officers called the Free Officers, still bitter from their defeat in Arab-Israeli War and about the general decline of Egypt, took advantage of the chaos and riots of the previous six months forcing King Farouk to step down in a bloodless coup. The Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) took control of Egypt and, like the "Young Turks" three decades earlier, initiated wide-ranging changes

to the political and economic landscape of Egypt. The RCC dismissed the parliament to rid Egypt of the political elite who supported Farouk and were seen as puppets of the British. However, it was the land reform they instituted that gained the most favor from average Egyptians. Under the new rules a single family could not own more than 100 acres of land. This rule precipitated the breakup of large land holding own by the wealthiest Egyptians and allowed poor farmers to acquire their own land. The new regime also nationalized most of the large businesses in Egypt. These actions made President Gamel Abdel Nasser a hero to the vast majority of his people and also identified him as a rising star in Middle Eastern politics.

Nasser was an Egyptian and Arab nationalist. He was a bold, aggressive, and charismatic leader that was determined to lead Egypt out of the malaise created by Farouk. Along with land reform Nasser had three main objectives within Egypt:

- Limit western (mainly British) control of key sectors of the economy
- Modernize his military to prevent another defeat against the Israelis
- Build the high dam at Aswan to control flooding in the Nile Delta

All three of these objectives ultimately created friction between Egypt and the West. At a time when the Cold War was heating up, Nasser's decision to purchase military hardware from the Soviets went against the U.S. foreign policy objective of containing the expansion of communism. Although the U.S. saw this move as a fracture in Egyptian U.S. relations, Nasser had little choice in going to the Soviets, as the U.S. was unwilling to sell modern military equipment to Egypt for fear it would be used against the Israelis. Nasser's alignment with the Soviet Bloc through military sales caused the U.S. (and British) to renege on its promise to help finance the Aswan dam project. Nasser's

response to Secretary of State Dulles withdrawal of the loan offer was to nationalize the Suez Canal as a way to fund the Aswan project; a crisis ensued. Egyptians applauded Nasser's move to take control of the Suez Canal, but in late October 1956 Israeli, British, and French forces invaded the Canal Zone. Israel rapidly overran the Egyptian forces in the Sinai, but against pleas from his own generals to request a ceasefire, Nasser would not back down. The U.S. condemned the invasion and backed a UN resolution for withdrawal. By December 1956 the British and French had withdrawn, and after intense pressure from the U.S., the Israelis withdrew in March 1957. The Egyptian Army had proven inept during the Suez Crisis, but Nasser was considered a hero for standing up to western and Israeli aggression.

Following the Suez Crisis Nasser's stature in the Arab world achieved new heights, enabling him to mobilize Arab nationalism in the region. For a brief time his leadership in the Arab world allowed him to join forces with Syria and create the United Arab Republic (UAR). The UAR would dissolve in 1961 due to differences over representation in the political structure, but Nasser's greatest loss of stature in the Arab world was his defeat in 1967 at the hands of the Israelis during the Six Day War. After ten years of military buildup, and billions of dollars, Nasser's Air Force was defeated within hours and Israeli ground forces captured the entire Sinai Peninsula in three days. In the aftermath of the Egyptian defeat, Nasser resigned. However, mass public demonstrations for his return convinced him to remain in power. President Nasser died in September 1970 two months after the completion of the Aswan Dam and mere hours after negotiating a ceasefire between Jordan and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). Nasser's legacy within Egypt and the Arab world was that he was a man of the

people that courageously stood up to the West and fought for the Palestinians. Building the high dam at Aswan was his biggest achievement in terms of the Egyptian economy. The Aswan Dam created thousands of jobs during the construction and has allowed for a much more stable and productive agriculture sector to present day. Nasser's was also responsible for turning public opinion in Egypt against the U.S. through numerous public statements and speeches.

Egyptian Vice President Anwar Sadat assumed the presidency upon Nasser's death. Sadat's presidency was significant as it pertains to this paper for three reasons: the 1973 Arab-Israeli War, the shift away from the Soviets and towards the U.S., and the peace treaty with Israel. During the three years following Nasser's death the international community attempted multiple times to settle the Arab-Israeli dispute. On 6 October 1973 (Yom Kippur) the Egyptians and Syrians simultaneously attacked Israel; both had initial success. Israeli forces quickly responded to the surprise attack and pushed the Egyptian Army back towards the Suez Canal. When the UN ceasefire went into effect on 25 October, the Egyptians held territory on the east bank of the Suez Canal (territory lost during the Six Day War) and Israeli forces held territory on the west bank (mainland Egypt). Both belligerents eventually returned to the antebellum borders. President Sadat's decision to attack Israel, along with the Egyptian Army's ability to breach the Bar-Lev Line and advance into the Sinai, increased his popularity with the Egyptian people even though Egypt ultimately gained no ground and suffered significant losses. Regardless of Sadat's popularity for going to war with Israel, the 1973 war proved to Sadat that the best path forward for Egypt was peace.

The Egyptian Soviet relationship was strained prior to the 1973 war. A year prior to the war, Egypt expelled Soviet military advisor signaling a drastic shift from the close relationship under Nasser. Following the war, Sadat continued to distance Egypt from Soviet influence and in 1976 abrogated their friendship treaty. Average Egyptians, as well as most of the Arab world, viewed Sadat's shift away from Soviets and towards the U.S. negatively. Nasser had the overwhelming support of the Egyptian people for his anti-U.S. views citing America's close ties to Western Europe and support to Israel. Sadat's decision to break with that philosophy in the late 1970s alienated him from other Arab leaders more and more as peace negotiations with Israel continued. However, the attitude of Americas towards Egypt began to improve as he reached out not only to the U.S., but also to Israel and even the Vatican.

Sadat's boldest move during his presidency was signing a peace treaty with Israel. Ultimately the peace treaty resulted in Egypt gaining back all of the land lost during the 1967 War (a result the 1973 War proved could not be done back by force). The treaty was a territorial victory without armed conflict, but some Egyptians did not view it that way. The younger generation had been raised in an environment that made peace with Israel without resolving the Palestinian issue unthinkable, resulting in domestic opposition for Sadat. However, he did not acquiesce to public opinion or the Arab world and formally signed the peace treaty in Washington D.C. on 26 March 1979. As part of the negotiations that led to the peace treaty, the U.S. agreed to support both parties with economic and military aid (first appropriation, Public Law 96-35, 20 July 1979), which continues today. The significance of the peace treaty on the world stage earned Sadat and Begin the Nobel Peace Prize. However, in the Arab world the treaty



with Israel was seen as a betrayal causing Egypt's expulsion from the Arab League. There was also discontent within Egypt as a result of the treaty, which led to Sadat's assassination on 6 October 1981.

Hosni Mubarak succeeded Sadat as President of Egypt following the assassination. Mubarak was a career Egyptian Air Force officer that rose to the rank of Air Chief Marshal (equivalent to the U.S. Chief of Staff of the Air Force) prior to becoming Vice President in 1975. Mubarak's 30-year reign as president were characterized by a continuous struggle against Islamic fundamentalists, oppressive state security, and a close relationship with the U.S. Following Sadat's assassination Mubarak implemented Emergency Law (which remained in effect until he stepped down on 11 February 2010). The declared state of emergency gave the regime the authority to suspend constitutional rights, extend police powers, prohibit demonstrations, censor the media, and ban all non-governmental political activity (groups like the Muslim Brotherhood). In the weeks after the assassination, hundreds of Islamic fundamentalists were arrested including notable personalities such as Dr. Ayman al-Zawahiri and Omar Abdel-Rahman<sup>4</sup> (the Blind Sheik). The assassin, Lieutenant Khalid Islambouli, belonged to Egyptian Islamic Jihad, but numerous members of the Muslim Brotherhood were also arrested. As a result, the relationship between the Muslim Brotherhood and Mubarak started off poorly and only improved slightly over the years. As late as 2005 the Mubarak regime embarked upon anti-Brotherhood intimidation campaign to quell the tide of Brotherhood influence in Parliament (they were elected as independents due to a ban on running openly as Muslim Brothers). Many Brothers lost their seats and took to the streets in protest charging that the election was rigged. They

were arrested and jailed during one such protest. One of those arrested was the current president, Mohamed Morsi. Morsi spend seven months in prison for his actions; an indication of how far Mubarak would go to suppress the influence of the Brothers. Although Mubarak had nearly three decades to improve the conditions in Egypt, and thereby marginalize the Islamists grassroots campaign against the regime, he didn't possess the vision, capacity, or moral authority to do so.

Sadat's assassination had a lasting impact on the Mubarak presidency. Along with establishing Emergency Law, he also expanded Egypt's State Security Investigations Service (SSI). SSI was the Ministry of Interior's department that conducted investigations on groups and individuals presumed to be conducting subversive acts against the regime. Their brutal tactics were well known throughout Egypt and they were feared because of them. A 2008 State Department report on human rights in Egypt stated that:

“...Security forces used unwarranted lethal force and tortured and abused prisoners and detainees, in most cases with impunity. Prison and detention center conditions were poor. Security forces arbitrarily arrested and detained individuals, in some cases for political purposes, and kept them in prolonged pretrial detention.”<sup>5</sup>

These human rights abuses and the oppression of dissenting political views were a major point of contention between multiple U.S. administrations and Mubarak. The U.S. repeatedly condemned Mubarak for his failure to implement meaningful human rights reforms, but the practices continued until the end of his regime. From the Egyptian perspective, the U.S. stood by year after year watching the abuse continue and did nothing.

As opposition to the Mubarak's presidency grew in Egypt, his close ties with the U.S. became a liability. Mubarak never achieved the stature of Nasser or Sadat even though he was the longest serving president Egypt's history. Moreover, amongst his peers in the Arab world he was seen as more of a follower. He never stepped forward to lead like Nasser had in the 50s and 60s even though there were multiple opportunities to do so. The First and Second Intifadas are examples of opportunities missed. Although a difficult set of circumstances to be sure, with Egypt's history and connection with the Gaza Strip and its relationship with the U.S. and Israel, Mubarak could have played a major role in stopping the violence (in both intifadas Palestinian casualties were much greater). To Mubarak's opponents in Egypt, his inaction during the intifadas was seen as proof that the U.S. (Israel's benefactor) held sway over his regime. Mubarak's longstanding, close relationship with the U.S. further distanced him from an Egyptian population where 80% had an unfavorable opinion of the U.S. The Egyptian people had reached their breaking point and took to the streets in protest. Mubarak's SSI could not quell the protests that began on 25 January 2011, and with the Egyptian military staying on the sideline, Mubarak was forced to step down on 11 February.

### **Egypt's Anti-Western View**

The anti-western/anti-U.S. sentiment that dominates Egypt today began during the British occupation in 1882. Although the British modernized the agriculture and textile industries, initially creating greater prosperity for average Egyptians, the British of that period are remembered as heavy-handed occupiers. The Dinshaway is just one example normally cited by Egyptians from that era. However, the biggest cause of

Egyptian and Middle Eastern anti-Western opinion comes from good-intentioned decisions made by the League of Nations and the United Nations. The mandate system instituted in the Middle East following World War I by the League of Nations created a host of religious and territorial issues. The reasoning for the mandate system began with the assumption that the former Ottoman territories Mesopotamia (Iraq), Palestine (Israel and Jordan), and Syria (included Lebanon) were incapable of self-governance. Although there was merit to the argument that some assistance and monitoring was needed to ensure that these former Ottoman territories did not fall into chaos, it was seen in the region as just another example of imperial powers (in this case European) imposing their will on the Arab people. Iraq was the first mandate to earn self-rule in 1932. The French mandate of Syria was more complicated and upon being granted self-rule in 1944, two separate countries emerged, Syria and Lebanon. The most complex was, and still is, the British mandate of Palestine. Within that mandate was a thousand years of territorial disputes between Jews and Muslims, which would not be solved by the mandate system. Transjordan was given independence from the Palestine mandate in 1946. However, modern day Israel was still in dispute between the Jews and the Palestinian Arabs. The British notified the UN that they would vacate the mandate on 14 May 1948. On the afternoon of 14 May, the Jewish leadership in Palestine announced the formation of the State of Israel; the Arab-Israeli War ensued. Egypt was not part of the mandate system. However, as a founding member of the Arab League they were solidly aligned with the Arabs that bristled against the imposed governance of the mandate system. Ultimately they fought along side their fellow Arabs in the coalition that attacked the new State of Israel. The establishment of Israel from

League of Nations, and subsequently the UN, against the repeated objections by the Arab nations solidified their animosity towards the West.

After the establishment of Israel there were other incidents that reinforced the Egyptian's negative perception of the West such as the tripartite invasion of the Suez Crisis. The negative perception of the U.S. initially stemmed from its support of Israel. The Nasser regime's repeated anti-U.S. statements further damaged those perceptions. The U.S. relationship with Sadat improved Egyptian public opinion somewhat. In recent history however, the U.S. reaction to 9/11, the invasion of Iraq in 2003, and supporting an oppressive Mubarak regime for three decades are responsible for America's high unfavorable rating among Egyptians. It is important that the U.S. be aware of how its actions are perceived and impact the citizens of Egypt in order not to exacerbate the current high unfavorable rating.

### **Muslim Brotherhood**

The Muslim Brotherhood, and their conservative Islamist dogma, has been a powerful force in Egyptian society and politics since its founding in 1928. The founder of the Muslim Brotherhood, Hassan al-Banna, believed that the West's decadence, and its corresponding impact on Muslim societies, caused the plight of the masses in Egypt and the Middle East. He declared that the only way for Egyptians and the broader Muslim community (Umma) to return to prosperous, meaningful lives was through Islam. Therefore, he and his Muslim Brotherhood members advocated the establishment of an Islamic State governed by Sharia Law<sup>6</sup>. With slogans like "Islam is the solution" the Muslim Brothers spread their ideology through schools, mosques, and other civic organizations. The public embraced their philosophy and membership grew to

approximately 500,000 members by the late 1940s. However, in 1948 Egyptian King Farouk banned the Brotherhood for its ties to a series of bombings targeting British colonialists, and more problematic to the regime, the assassination of Egyptian Prime Minister Mahmoud al-Nuqrashi. The King's crackdown on the Brotherhood was quite harsh and many were jailed or killed. The Muslim Brotherhood was outlawed by the regime, but the desire of its members to establish an Islamic state and shed the bonds of the colonial West remained.

Following the bloodless coups by the Free Officers that deposed King Farouk in 1952, the Muslim Brotherhood came out of the shadows. The Brothers, true to their founding principles, pushed for a constitution based on the Quran, Sharia as the law of the land, the prohibition of alcohol, the veiling of women, and other tenets of an Islamic State. However, the RCC did not share the Brother's vision for Egypt. Instead, the RCC created a more secular, single party system. This turned most of the Muslim Brotherhood against the new regime. The most prominent Brother to turn against the new regime was Sayyad Qutb. In October 1954, a Muslim Brother attempted to assassinate Nasser. In reaction to the assassination attempt, Nasser had thousands of Muslim Brothers arrested and jailed, and some were tortured. Qutb was one of those jailed. He spent over ten years in jail during which time his views became more radical. He produced two works in jail that to this day inspire Islamic fundamentalists: *In the Shade of the Quran*, and *Milestones*. Besides reiterating the need for true Muslims to create an Islamic State as al-Banna had done, he expanded the path to accomplishing that vision by calling for the wrath of Jihad to be visited upon Muslim regimes that had gone astray. Qutb was released from prison briefly at the end of 1964, but was

rearrested eight months later for conspiring to overthrow the Egyptian regime. He was found guilty, sentenced to death, and executed, becoming a Brotherhood Martyr and symbol of commitment to the goal of Islam. Since Qutb's death, the Brotherhood enjoyed only brief periods of tolerance by the Sadat and Mubarak regimes. Therefore, they continued pursuing their goals through a grassroots campaign by proselytizing in schools and mosques. Their ideology was persuasive to the downtrodden of Egyptian society and the Brotherhood also provided basic services such as medical treatment when the government failed to meet their needs.

On 25 January 2011 Egyptians took to the streets demanding that Mubarak step down due to years oppression, bad economic policy, and corruption. Spurred on by the success of protestors in Tunisia, a coalition of predominantly secular protestors weathered the violence of the regime's security forces causing Mubarak to step down on 11 February. The Muslim Brotherhood did not play a major role in the demonstrations, but were positioned to take advantage its success. The Brothers rapidly formed the Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) to compete in the upcoming elections. The FJP had enormous advantages over the other political parties: they were well organized, they could highlight their history of helping Egyptians when the regime wouldn't, and the communication apparatus of their network allowed them to quickly adapt to the chaotic environment. They also moderated their Islamist agenda during the campaign with their Presidential candidate, Mohamed Morsi, declaring that he wanted to build a "...democratic, civil and modern state." In the run-off election between Morsi of the FJP, and Ahmed Shafik a former Air Force general and Mubarak's Prime Minister, Morsi received 52% of the vote and became the first freely elected President of

Egypt. After an 84-year struggle, the Brothers finally achieved their goal of coming to power in Egypt. The protestors that brought down the regime are now waiting to see if their revolution was hijacked by Islamist, or if Morsi lives up to the image he portrayed during the campaign of being *for* religious freedom, free speech, rights for women, and equal opportunity for all of the citizens of Egypt.

### **President Mohamed Morsi**

Dr. Mohamed Morsi was a member of the Egyptian Parliament from 2000 to 2005 and a senior member of the Muslim Brotherhood. His personal story is an impressive and compelling one. He is man of meager beginnings that was able to ascend to the Presidency of Egypt. He was raised as a devout Muslim in a small Nile delta town with a father who emphasized education. He did very well in school and ultimately attended Cairo University, Egypt's most prestigious University, where he earned a bachelor's and master's degree in engineering. After graduating in 1978 from Cairo University, Morsi moved to the United States where he completed his Ph.D. in engineering at the University of Southern California. He remained in California after earning his Ph.D. as an engineering professor at the University of California Northridge. In 1985 Dr. Morsi and his family returned to Egypt where he continued his career as an engineering professor at Zagazig University in Egypt.

Dr. Morsi joined the Muslim Brotherhood in 1977<sup>7</sup>. He became an active member upon his return from the United States and quickly ascended to the highest echelon of the Brotherhood. In an interview with Eric Trager for the New Republic<sup>8</sup>, a former Brotherhood youth Abdel Monem al-Mahmoud describe Morsi as, "...an icon of the extremists in the Muslim Brotherhood—someone who not only pushed the Brotherhood



to adopt a more extreme agenda, but advocated for purging those leaders who disagreed with it.” Providing additional insight into President Morsi’s potential worldview is a poster that hangs in Morsi’s childhood bedroom. The poster is of the Al Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem. Emblazed on it is the slogan, “We will return, oh Aqsa.”<sup>9</sup> When the interviewer, Joshua Hammer, asked Morsi’s cousin how he should interpret the poster, he was told, “a war will happen again between the Arabs and the Jews and we will regain Jerusalem.” People can certainly change, but these glimpses into President Morsi’s past create apprehension amongst secular Egyptians as well as policy makers in the U.S.

Morsi’s initial actions upon being elected as the President of Egypt were very encouraging. He officially resigned from the Muslim Brotherhood’s Freedom and Justice Party prior to assuming office stating that he was the “President of all of Egypt.”<sup>10</sup> He reinforced that inclusive attitude during a speech in Cairo’s Tahrir Square on 29 June 2012 where he declared that as President he would, “...complete the journey to a civil, constitutional, modern State,” and went on to say, “...we are united as one, we are all one hand. I will not differentiate between supporters and opponents.”<sup>11</sup> These statements were praised by a broad coalition of Egyptians including the Coptic Christian community, which account for 10% of the population. Morsi has also demonstrated his commitment to peace and his ability to be a statesman by mediating a cease-fire between Hamas in Gaza and the Israelis when they were on the brink of a ground conflict. Moreover, his willingness to stop the violence in Gaza is an indication that he supports the ideals and framework of the Camp David Accords. However, there have been other issues during his short term as President that call into question his

inclusive tone during the campaign. Morsi's handling of the Egyptian constitution is one such case.

The process of writing a new constitution for Egypt was controversial from the beginning. In June 2012, two days prior to the Presidential election, the Egyptian Supreme Courts invalidated the parliamentary elections for the Lower House citing them as unconstitutional, thereby dissolving the Lower House. Therefore, the task of writing the constitution fell to the Islamist-controlled Upper House<sup>12</sup>. Egyptian minorities (Christians, liberals, secularists, and others) held public demonstrations voicing their opposition to the make up of the constitutional committee; to no avail, the committee's composition remained the same. The protestor's fears were realized as the draft document began to circulate. It contained many controversial clauses such as Article 68, which provided equal rights for women in accordance with Sharia Law, ultimately subordinating woman's rights to men's rights. Women's rights groups were outraged and successfully had that Article removed prior to the committee vote. However, the final draft did include Article 219, "The principles of Islamic Sharia include general evidence, foundational rules, rules of jurisprudence, and credible sources accepted in Sunni doctrines and by the larger community" are still concerning from the women's rights perspective. There are also concerns over religious freedoms for non-Muslim Egyptians. Article 3 specifically separates Christians and Jews from the Muslim population by establishing that, "The canon principles of Egyptian Christians and Jews are the main source of legislation for their personal status laws, religious affairs, ...". Article 43 guarantees only the freedom of belief and practice for "divine"<sup>13</sup> religions, not complete freedom of religion. There are numerous other examples of a shift to more

Islamist-leaning laws from the 1971 constitution, but only time will tell if the new constitution ultimately changes Egyptian society. The new constitution was sent to the Egyptian people in a referendum in mid-December and passed with 64% of the vote. President Morsi signed it into law on 26 December 2012. Controversial issues such as the constitution, President Morsi's petition to the U.S. for the release Omar Abdel-Rahman (the Blind Sheik), and his prior anti-Semitic statements cast doubt on the veracity of his inclusive campaign rhetoric. However, Morsi is a democratically elected president and subject to the will of the people; the same people that brought down the Mubarak regime.

### **U.S. Foreign Policy**

Formulating a coherent and effective U.S. foreign policy towards Egypt is a complex problem. Not only will the U.S. have to develop a strategy for bilateral agreements and policies for Egypt, but synchronize those policies within a regional context dominated by tension between neighbors. The U.S. strategy for Egypt will also be subject to domestic political influences such as the lobbyists, public opinion, the media, and Congress. Below is an attempt to define the general themes of that policy within the framework of the elements of national power.

### **Diplomacy**

Diplomatically the U.S. will be challenged at times to find common ground with an Egyptian regime that is trending towards political Islam. President Morsi has proven difficult predict and routinely plays to the anti-U.S./Israeli attitudes within Egypt when speaking publicly. His public statements negatively impact U.S. public opinion, which in turn makes it politically difficult for the Obama administration to sustain a positive public

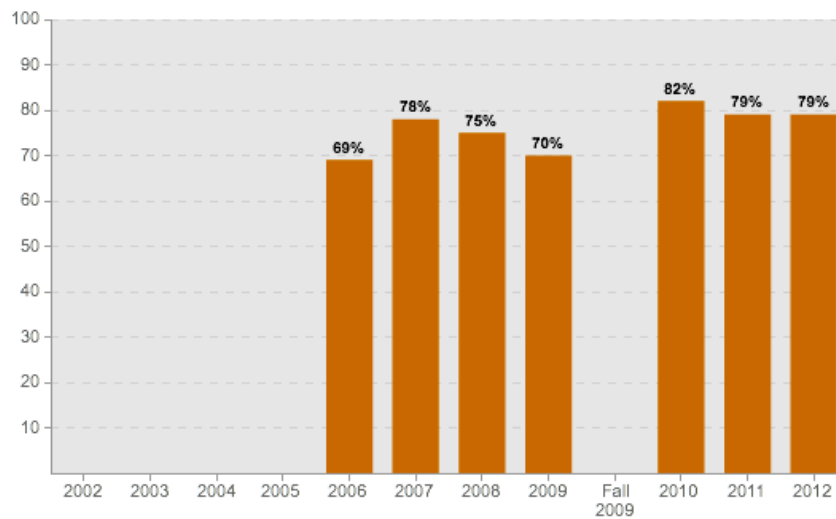
relationship with the Morsi regime. However, Egypt's strategic importance in the Middle East dictates that the U.S. attempts to work with Egypt to create stability in the region.

The overarching goals for U.S. diplomacy in the near term should be to assist Egypt in her transition to a functioning democratic nation, protect U.S. national interests, and ensure the universal human rights<sup>14</sup> of the Egyptian people. Within these broad categories detailed plans will be developed. The U.S. must produce a strategy that can be clearly and consistently communicated to the Morsi regime. Additionally, "Redlines" and consequences must also be established as part of the strategy to ensure that U.S. support to Egypt achieves a desired result. As issues arise between the U.S. and the Morsi regime, the U.S. should remain firm, but respectful, and achieve the best outcome possible for Americans and well as the Egyptian people.

### **Information**

The perception of the U.S. in Egypt is overwhelmingly negative. Despite the support the U.S. has given Egypt over the last four decades, 4 out of 5 Egyptians have an unfavorable opinion of the U.S.<sup>15</sup>

**Egypt: Percent responding Unfavorable, all years measured**



**Full question wording:** Please tell me if you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable or very unfavorable opinion of the United States.

**Notes:** Favorable combines "very favorable" and "somewhat favorable" responses. Unfavorable combines "very unfavorable" and "somewhat unfavorable."

This is clearly an area that the U.S. needs to improve dramatically to achieve its foreign policy objectives with respect to Egypt. A portion of that negative opinion can be traced to actual policies or actions by the U.S. that are opposed by individual Egyptians (2003 Iraq War, support to Israel, etc.), but some of it has developed through ignorance. With the advent of the Internet, social media, blogs and satellite TV, the U.S. now has the ability to communicate directly to the Egyptian people. The U.S. needs to use these tools as part of a national strategy to ensure the Egyptian people access to the information. The strategy should also be proactive by offering Middle Eastern media outlet the opportunity to interview U.S. administration officials. This will be uncomfortable at times, but the American version of events and analysis will at least be heard. With such a poor U.S. approval rating in Egypt, an information strategy will take

years to be effective. Measures of effectiveness need to be developed to ensure resources are applied to gain the greatest effect.

### **Military**

The military element of national power will be crucial to achieving U.S. foreign policy objectives in Egypt in the near-term. The traditional use of the military as an element of national power involves coercion through the actual use of force or through deterrence by the threat of using military force. Although using the U.S. military in that traditional sense as a way to influence the Egyptian regime certainly remains an option, for the purposes of this paper the military element of national power is used to sustain a connection to a powerful segment of the Egyptian society.

Following the signing of the Camp David Accords in 1978, the U.S. and Egyptian military developed a close and mutually beneficial military to military relationship. Through combined exercises such as Bright Star, Egyptian and American military forces trained side by side. And due to the 30 plus years of conducting these exercises, many Egyptian and U.S. officers have sustained those relationships through the ranks. It also allows Egyptians to view first hand American values through the professional and respectful conduct of average U.S. soldiers. The International Military Education and Training program allows some Egyptian officers attend courses in the United States such as the Command and General Staff College (CGSC) at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Foreign officers attending of yearlong programs like CGSC gain a greater understanding of, and connection to, the U.S.

Since Morsi took office he has taken steps to reduce influence and power of the Egyptian military within Egypt. In August 2012 Field Marshall Tantawi was forced to

retire along with other Egyptian generals. However, Egypt remains a powerful force in Egypt as well as being the largest military in Africa and among the Arab nations. In addition, the Egyptian military also controls a large portion of the economy and even under the December 2012 Constitution the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) autonomously controls the military budget (including \$1.3 Billion/year in U.S. Military aid). Should protesters take to the streets like they did in 2011 the Egyptian military is still capable of assuming power.

### **Economic**

Of all of the elements of national power, the U.S. ability to influence Egypt through economic policies (economic and military aid) will be the most politically contentious given the current Egyptian regime. The ongoing U.S. fiscal debate between the House of Representatives and the President could create an environment that makes it difficult to provide economic aid to a government led by the Muslim Brotherhood. However, providing Egypt economic assistance would be the most effective long-term tool the U.S. could use to ensure that the Muslim Brotherhood doesn't succeed in creating an Islamic state. A senior Egyptian minister made this statement about this rising tide of Islamists in Egypt following the Muslim Brotherhood victories in the 2005 parliamentary elections, 'Give me five years of high growth, and I bet you, it would go away.'<sup>16</sup>

The current economic situation in Egypt is fairly bleak. Unemployment is high and GDP growth is sluggish, which is creating significant pressure on President Morsi to improve the economy.



As bad as the overall unemployment numbers are for Egypt, the most concerning statistic for the regime is the fact that the demographic of 15 to 29 years of age accounts for 70%<sup>17</sup> of the total unemployment (2.38 million of 3.4 million, this demographic flooded Tahrir Square and ousted Mubarak). Tourism, a major sector in the Egyptian economy (employs 12.5% of the labor force)<sup>18</sup>, was lagging prior to the Arab Spring. However, following the departure of Mubarak, Egypt's tourism is down 32% and revenues are down a corresponding 30%. This drastic drop in tourism is mainly due to security concerns and the day-to-day chaos on the streets of Egypt.



Finally, there has been a sharp drop in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) following the regime change. New restrictions on the amount of capital transfers allowed out of Egypt as well as the threat of nationalization in certain sectors of the economy are keeping foreign investors on the sideline. All of these economic numbers are bad, which will require the Morsi regime to rapidly improve Egypt's. One of the major factors in President Sadat's change of policy towards Israel was the flagging Egyptian economy. The two costly wars (1967 and 1973) and the subsequent replenishment of military hardware was an enormous economic drain on the economy. Therefore it is plausible that Morsi will feel that same economic pressure and work with the U.S. to improve the standard of living in Egypt if he wants to remain in office.

These poor economic conditions provide an opportunity for the U.S. to influence the Egyptian regime through economic element of national power. The U.S. should continue to provide "conditions based" economic aid to Egypt. Fiscal Year (FY) 2014 budget is programed to provide \$250 million in economic aid. If the conditions are met the U.S. should provide that aid. Additionally, Egypt has an enormous untapped labor market, of which 90% have a secondary school education. The U.S. should incentivize FDI in Egypt by insuring those investments against nationalization. Although FDI from the U.S. would have a minor impact on the Egyptian economy in the short run, it could provide enormous long-term benefits: Reduced unemployment, higher standard of living in Egypt.

## **Conclusion**

The implications of the Arab Spring on U.S. foreign policy towards Egypt are very complex and dynamic. Thirty years of working with the same Egyptian leader made

U.S. policymakers comfortable creating policies and predicting the outcomes with the Mubarak regime. That comfort zone is now gone. President Morsi presents new challenges routinely and is anything but predictable. The other major implication of the Arab Spring is the weakened position of the Egyptian military. The retirement of Field Marshall Tantawi shortly after Morsi assumed the presidency signaled a shift towards civilian control over the military and ultimately diminished the influence of the military. To effectively secure U.S. national interests in the Middle East, America must assist Egypt when it can and stand firmly for her values.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Khedive is a title similar to Viceroy: A regal official who runs a country, colony, or province in the name of and as a representative of the monarch (in this case the Ottoman Empire).

<sup>2</sup> Alfred Milner, 1<sup>st</sup> Viscount Milner. Undersecretary for Finance in Egypt (1888-1892); High Commissioner for Southern Africa (1897-1901); Secretary of State for War (1918-1919); Secretary of State for the Colonies (1919-1921)

<sup>3</sup> Tarek Osman, *Egypt on the Brink: From Nasser to Mubarak*, (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2010), 37.

<sup>4</sup> Omar Abdel-Rahman was convicted of seditious conspiracy in the 1993 bombing to the World Trade Center.

<sup>5</sup> "2008 Human Rights Report: Egypt." U.S. Department of State. February 25, 2009. Accessed December 27, 2012. <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/2008/nea/119114.htm>.

<sup>6</sup> Sharia definition: The highly articulated code of approved Muslim behavior, based primarily on the Quran and *sunna*, and secondarily on analogy, consensus, and judicial opinion.

<sup>7</sup> "Mohamed Morsi." 2013. *The Biography Channel website*. Dec 17 2012, 07:50 <http://www.biography.com/people/mohamed-morsi-20862695>.

<sup>8</sup> "Meet the Islamist Political Fixer Who Could Be Egypt's Next President." 2012. *The New Republic*. website. Dec 8 2012 12:41 <http://www.tnr.com/article/world/102988/egypt-muslim-brotherhood-election-mohamed-morsi>.

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- <sup>10</sup> Knell, Y. (2012, November 23). Egypt President: Muslim Brotherhood's Mohammed Morsi. *BBC News*. Retrieved December 6, 2012, from <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-18371427>
- <sup>11</sup> English Translation of President Mohamed Morsi's Speech in Tahrir Square, Friday June 29, 2012. (2012, June 30). Retrieved from <http://www.ikhwanweb.com/article.php?id=30153>
- <sup>12</sup> The Muslim Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice Party and the Islamist Al-Nour Party made up 70% of the Upper House (called the Shura Council, consisting of 150 members).
- <sup>13</sup> Divine religions consist of Islam, Christianity, and Judaism, what the Quran calls "People of the book."
- <sup>14</sup> "The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, UDHR, Declaration of Human Rights, Human Rights Declaration, Human Rights Charter, The Un and Human Rights." UN News Center. Accessed February 19, 2013. <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/>.
- <sup>15</sup> "Key Indicators Database." Pew Research Center. Accessed December 11, 2012. <http://www.pewglobal.org/database/?indicator=1>.
- <sup>16</sup> Tarek Osman, *Egypt on the Brink: From Nasser to Mubarak*, (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2010), 110.
- <sup>17</sup> "Business Today: Jobs for Youth." Business Today Egypt. January 9, 2013. Accessed January 21, 2013. <http://www.businesstodayegypt.com/article/artId:547/Jobs-for-Youth/seclId:3>.
- <sup>18</sup> "2012 Investment Climate Statement - Egypt." U.S. Department of State. June 2012. Accessed December 23, 2012. <http://www.state.gov/e/eb/rls/othr/ics/2012/191142.htm>.

